

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 05268 060557Z

14

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6333

INFO AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 5268

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AS, PINT

SUBJ: HARRADINE EXPULSION FROM ALP THREATENS TO SPLIT THE  
TASMANIAN AND FEDERAL ALP

1. SUMMARY: THE ALP'S DECISION TO EXPEL BRIAN HARRADINE FROM THE ALP THREATENS TO SPLIT THE ALP'S FEDERAL AND TASMANIAN BRANCHES AND FURTHER REDUCES ALP PROSPECTS IN TASMANIA. END SUMMARY

2. THE LONG STANDING DISPUTE WITHIN THE ALP ABOUT THE STATUS OF TASMANIAN LABOR LEADER BRIAN HARRADINE ERUPTED AGAIN ON AUGUST 3 WHEN THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE OF THE ALP VOTED 11 TO 1 TO EXPEL HARRADINE FROM THE ALP. ON AUGUST 4 THE TASMANIAN BRANCH OF THE PARTY VOTED 7 TO 6 TO ALLOW HARRADINE TO REJOIN THE ALP PENDING THE OUTCOME OF HIS APPEAL TO THE ALP CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR 1977 AGAINST HIS EXPULSION FROM THE PARTY. FEDERAL INTERVENTION INTO THE PARTY'S TASMANIAN BRANCH SEEMS CERTAIN UNLESS THE BRANCH BACKS DOWN FROM ITS SUPPORT FOR MR. HARRADINE.

3. THE HARRADINE AFFAIR GOES BACK TO 1968 WHEN THE RIGHT-WING TASMANIAN LABOR LEADER WROTE A LETTER REFERRING  
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PAGE 02 CANBER 05268 060557Z

TO ATTEMPTS BY QTE FRIENDS OF THE COMMUNISTS END QTE

TO PREVENT HIM FROM TAKING HIS SEAT ON THE ALP'S FEDERAL EXECUTIVE. BECAUSE OF THIS STATEMENT HARRADINE WAS BARRED FROM TAKING HIS SEAT ON THE ALP FEDERAL EXECUTIVE IN '68. SINCE '68 THE TASMANIAN BRANCH HAS CONSISTENTLY REELECTED HIM TO THE ALP'S FEDERAL EXECUTIVE. THE ALP'S FEDERAL EXECUTIVE CONSISTENTLY REFUSED TO CONSIDER HOW TO HANDLE THE AFFAIR UNTIL AUG. 3.

4. HARRADINE HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY ATTACKED OVER THE YEARS BY THE EXTREME LEFT-WING OF THE ALP PRINCIPALLY BY SENATOR ARTHUR GIETZELT AND HIS BROTHER, RAY GIETZELT, A TRADE UNION OFFICIAL. THE LEFT-WING OF THE PARTY HAS ACCUSED HARRADINE OF MEETING WITH PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA CONNECTED WITH THE DEMOCRATIC LABOR PARTY AND THE NATIONAL CIVIC COUNCIL. HARRADINE HAS DENIED THESE ALLEGATIONS.

5. COMMENT: THIS DEVELOPMENT DIVIDES THE ALP IN TASMANIA AND COMING AS IT DOES ON THE HEELS OF THE BASS BY-ELECTION IN WHICH LABOR'S CANDIDATE WAS BADLY DEFEATED FURTHER DIMS LABOR'S PROSPECTS IN TASMANIA BOTH AT THE STATE AND FEDERAL LEVEL. ALP FEDERAL PRESIDENT BOB HAWKE BELIEVES THAT THE TASMANIAN BRANCH OF THE PARTY WILL EVENTUALLY GO ALONG WITH DECISION TO EXPEL HARRADINE. GIVEN THE NATURE OF THIS DISPUTE AND THE EMOTIONS INVOLVED ON BOTH SIDES WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THIS DISPUTE IS FAR FROM OVER.

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